

Fear Has No Permanent Address

I found it in a doorway down the street,
once in the remote region of a dream.
A farmer found it in his ruined wheat,
a soldier in a bayonet's gleam.
Once in a wind, I stood in terror, life
hung on the whim of wave and sky.
The lightning struck like Hamlet's knife
my boat reared toward the rocks and I
thought this is it: how every man
must reckon with the shape of fear
and be prepared with counter plan.
I've seen fear drive the sane as mad as Lear,
I've seen its presence with love
as sudden frost spring flower;
I've seen it wear the mask of crow and dove
and knock at any door at any hour.
So keep your wits cool as a game of chess,
beware of fog horns not the fog:
fear has no permanent address
but courage needs no barking dog.

--Harold Briggs

For Psyche, Ultimately

Between warped jamb of door, squeezed in
A dull, filament-winged, unsightly moth.
Which on seeing, was compelled, was impelled,
Was briefly bright in the just-struck flame.

--M. K. Book